



Standard Eurobarometer 80

**PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
Autumn 2013**

NATIONAL REPORT

MALTA

This survey has been requested and co-ordinated by the European Commission,
Directorate-General for Communication.

This report was produced for the European Commission's Representation in Malta.

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This National Report for the EU Representation in Malta was written by MISCO International Ltd.

INTRODUCTION

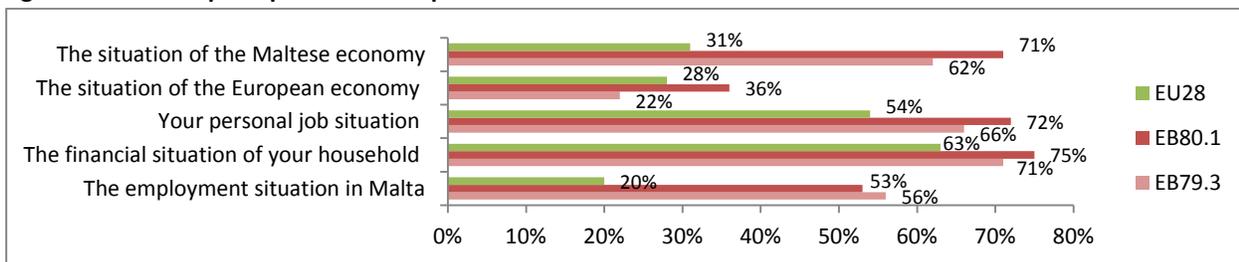
The national report outlines the main findings of Wave 80 of the Standard Eurobarometer. Fieldwork was conducted between 2nd and the 17th November 2013. A Maltese general election took place on 9th March 2013 resulting in the Labour Party winning a majority of seats and leading to a change in government from the Nationalist Party, which had been in power for 15 years. The Minister for Finance presented the 2014 Budget to the Maltese Parliament on 4th November 2013. These factors may have had some impact on the participants’ responses.

The report covers a number of topics, namely the current personal and economic situation, and issues faced by Malta and the EU due to the financial and economic crises; personal attitudes towards the EU, the Europe 2020 strategy and European Citizens’ Initiative; attitudes in general towards the EU and sources used to acquire information regarding national and European political matters.

THE CURRENT PERSONAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION

Respondents from Malta tended to be more satisfied with the life they lead, than the average EU28 population (EU28-75%; MT-89%). In fact, Malta is the 9th country – a tie with Germany - whose inhabitants have the most life satisfaction. The Maltese sample also rated a number of aspects, related to the local and EU economy, and their employment and financial situation, as ‘good’ and a minimum of eight percentage points above the EU28 average. Of particular note is the positive employment situation in Malta (EU28-20%; MT-53%), the result of which was only preceded by Germany (60%) and is at par with Luxembourg (53%). In November 2013, only 7,639 individuals from the total population, were registered as unemployed¹. When compared to local EB79.3² results, there was also an increase in positive perception of all aspects save for the employment situation in Malta (*Figure 1*).

Figure 1 – Positive perception towards personal and economic situation



TACKLING THE FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS

Maltese respondents believe that the European Union (EU28-22%; MT-36%), primarily, and also the local government (EU28-22%; MT-31%) are responsible for taking effective actions against the effects of the financial and economic crisis. These same respondents mostly believe that cohesion between EU Member states will help tackle this financial and economic crisis (90%), and in turn, working conjointly on the crisis will

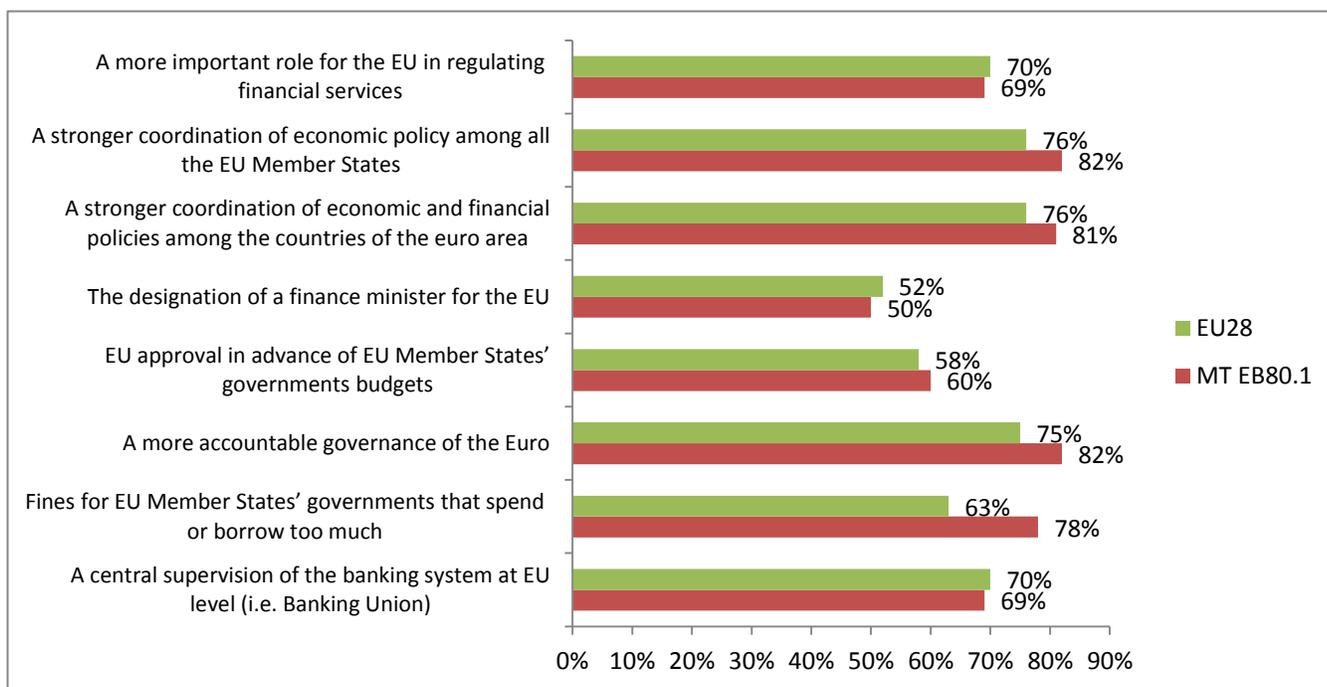
¹ Based on a National Statistics Office report ‘Registered Unemployed: November 2013’. Source: http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=3862

² EB79.3 fieldwork was carried out in May 2013

result in more close contact with other Member States (85%). The local sample also gave importance to reforms (86%) and reducing the public deficit (84%) in order to deal with such a crisis.

A more accountable governance of the Euro (EU28-75%; MT-82%); a stronger coordination of economic policy among all the EU Member States (EU28-76%; MT-82%); and a stronger coordination of economic and financial policies among the countries of the euro area (EU28-76%; MT-81%) are thought to be – by Maltese and the rest of the EU population alike - the three most effective measures to tackle the current financial and economic crisis (*Figure 2*).

Figure 2 – Effective measures to tackle the current financial and economic crisis



ISSUES FACED BY MALTA AND THE EU

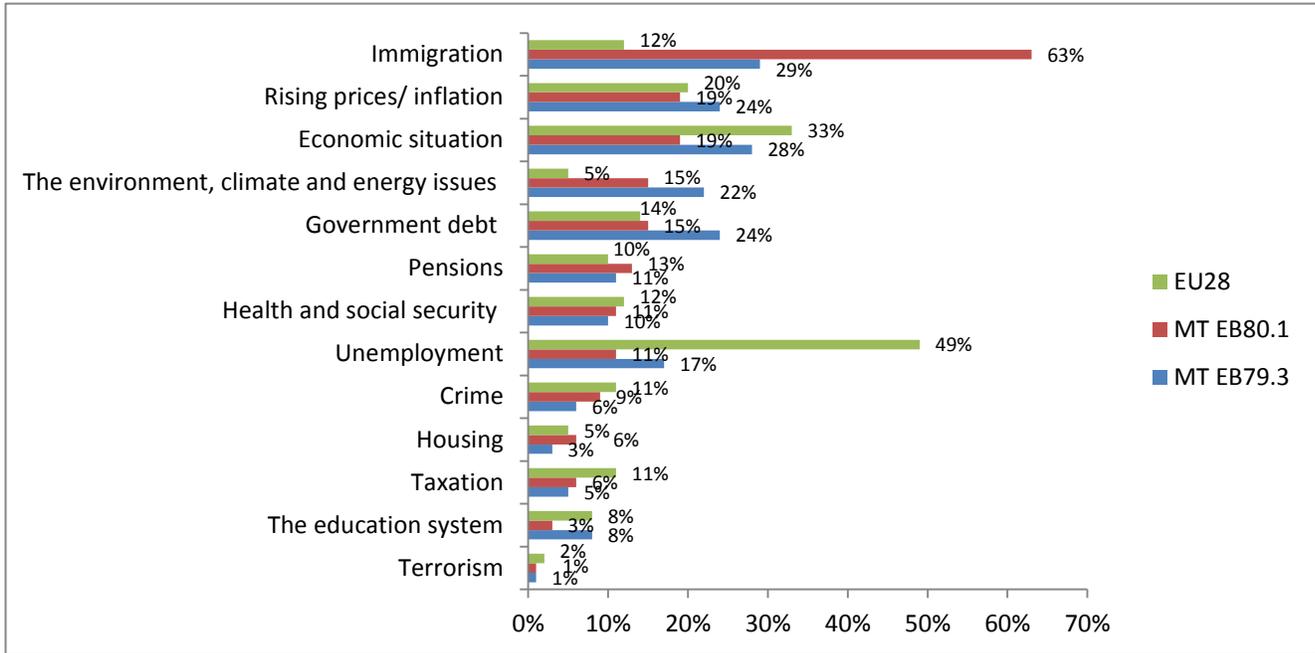
Malta

Immigration was by far claimed to be the most important issue that Malta is facing at the moment. Results from Malta about this particular issue were also the highest among all the EU28 countries (EU28-12%; MT-63%) and increased by 34 percentage points from Spring 2013³. On the other hand, the rest of the EU countries mentioned unemployment as their country's foremost concern (49%). The economic situation (19%) and inflation (19%) were mentioned as other important issues facing Malta at the moment – the former of which, however, has decreased by nine percentage points, and the latter, by five percentage points, since EB79.3 results. Moreover, inflation was also the issue that most EU28 respondents – including Malta - stated that they were personally facing (EU28-40%; MT-41%). The second-most mentioned personal issue for the rest of the EU28 countries was unemployment (20%), while that for Maltese respondents was the environment,

³ EB79.3 was carried out in May 2013 (Spring)

climate and energy issues (which has decreased in importance by five percentage points and stands at 16%) and immigration (which has increased in importance by seven percentage points and stands at 14%).

Figure 3 – Important issues that Malta is facing at the moment

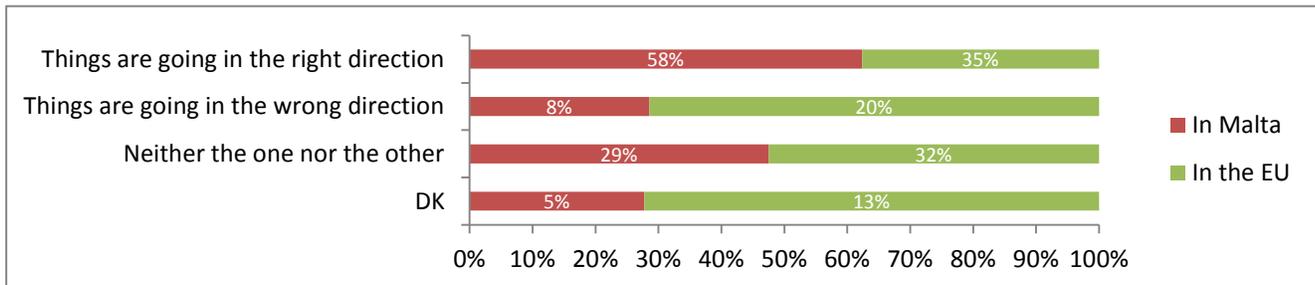


European Union

When asked to mention the most important issues facing the EU at the moment, both the local and the rest of the EU28 population mostly mentioned the economic situation of the EU (EU28-45%; MT-43%). Local respondents gave much more importance to the issue of immigration (EU28-16%; MT-40%), followed by unemployment – which was the second issue mentioned the most by the EU28 average (EU28-36%; MT-31%).

Contrary to the rest of all other EU countries, respondents from Malta believe that their country is moving in the right direction (EU28-26%; MT-58%), and Malta was the second-most likely country to believe that the European Union is not moving in any direction (EU28-18%; MT-32%) (Figure 4). Malta was preceded only by Estonia (36%) in this regard.

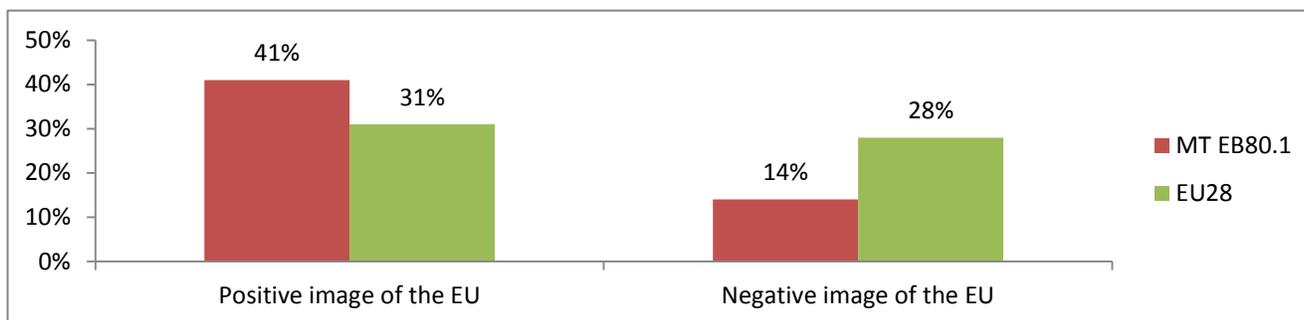
Figure 4 – Are Malta and the EU moving in the right direction?



PERSONAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EU

Malta is among the top six countries whose inhabitants have a positive image of the EU (EU28-31%; MT-41%). For local respondents, the EU is mostly associated with freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU (EU28-43%; MT-46%) and the Euro (EU28-32%; MT-33%). A similar trend can be seen with respondents from the rest of the EU countries (*Figure 5*).

Figure 5 – Positive image of the EU



Local respondents also believe that the EU helps protect its citizens (EU28-54%; MT-75%) and makes doing business easier in Europe (EU28-62%; MT-73%), but needs a clearer message (EU28-81%; MT-72%). Moreover, most Maltese respondents disagree that the EU makes the cost of living cheaper in Europe (EU28-71%; MT-62%) and that the EU is creating the conditions for more jobs in Europe (EU28-52%; MT-33%), albeit to a lesser extent than the EU28 average.

Similar to results obtained from respondents residing in the rest of the other EU Member States, local respondents are of the opinion that the main objectives to the building of Europe should be the development of the EU's economy to boost growth (EU28-17%; MT-24%) and the improvement of the standard of living of all EU citizens (EU28-27%; MT-32%).

In general, Malta is very optimistic about the future of the EU. In fact, Maltese respondents were ranked second (67%) – together with Ireland (67%) and preceded only by Denmark (75%) – in terms of optimism about the EU.

EUROPE 2020

EU citizens were asked to rate a number of initiatives according to how important they thought they were to help the EU exit the financial and economic crisis, and prepare for the following decade. Maltese and other European citizens alike considered all initiatives presented to be important and gave an average score of 8.3 and 7.6, respectively, out of a possible score of 10.

Similar to previous waves⁴, the initiative which received the highest mean score by respondents throughout the EU – including Malta - was that related to help given to the poor and socially excluded, and enabling them to play an active part in society (mean score=8.9). The second-most important initiative rated by Maltese

⁴ EB 75 (Spring wave); EB 76 (Autumn wave)

residents, for helping the EU to exit the financial and economic crisis, was the modernisation of labour markets with a view to raising employment levels (mean score=8.8). This was followed by the support towards an economy that uses fewer natural resources and emits less greenhouse gas (mean score=8.6) – an initiative which was given second priority in EB76. The least important initiative was considered to be the development of the e-economy by strengthening ultra fast Internet within the EU, which received the lowest mean score from all the EU Member States.

Furthermore, Malta was among the top ten countries which believe that the EU is moving in the right direction to exit the financial crisis and face challenges, as a result of these aforementioned priorities. In fact, 62% of the local population have this belief.

EU CITIZENSHIP

Three statements were read out to respondents. These regarded European Union citizenship. They were asked to indicate the extent to which each corresponds to their own opinion. More than half of the respondents from across all EU countries claimed that they think of themselves as EU citizens (59%). The sense of belonging was stronger among those living in Malta, with almost three-quarters of them agreeing that they feel they are EU citizens (74%) – despite this result having decreased by seven percentage points from EB79.3. Slightly less than half of respondents in Malta also claimed that they were aware of their rights as EU citizens (46%) and a similar trend was found across all other EU Member States (43%). Local individuals showed more interest in informing themselves about their rights as EU citizens (68%), when compared to the EU28 average results (59%).

Respondents who claimed that they would like to know more about their rights as EU citizens⁵ were given a list of specific rights of EU citizens, and were asked to identify the ones which they would like to know more about. Similar to results gathered in May 2013, the specific right which was given the most importance by respondents residing in Malta was the receiving of medical assistance in another EU country (32%). In November 2013, this was followed by the right to work in another EU Member State (20%). These two rights were also the ones of most interest to EU28 respondents in general.

EXPECTATIONS FROM THE EU

Respondents in the EU27 were asked about what they expect from the European Union. Twelve percent of EU28 respondents claimed that they had no expectations from the EU, compared to only two percent of respondents from Malta. On the contrary, the majority of respondents from all Member States excluding Malta, mentioned aspects related to the economy and fighting the financial crisis (47%), together with governance and cooperation (28%). With regard to local expectations, Maltese respondents again firstly mentioned the economy and the financial crisis (39%) – although to a lesser extent than the EU28 average. As opposed to the previous wave, where the second-most mentioned expectation of Maltese residents was related to governance and cooperation, this time round expectations focused extensively on external relations

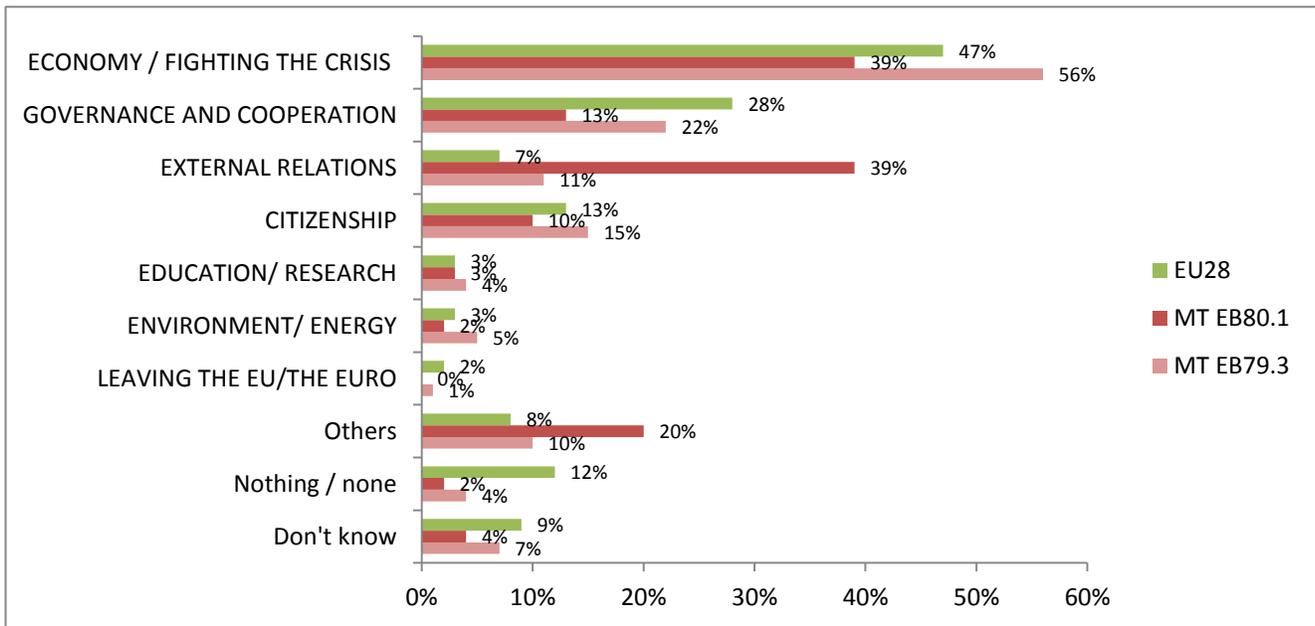
⁵ Respondents who claimed that they would like to know more about their rights as EU citizens amounted to: EU28 – 16,376 respondents; Malta - 339 respondents.

– in particular, immigration. Results show an increase of 28 percentage points in the importance of this issue, when compared to EB79.3 (EB79.3-8%; EB80.1-36%), and a difference of 33 percentage points when compared to the EU28 average (3%) (Figure 6).

Each category was sub-divided into a number of other aspects. More specifically, the aspects which respondents mentioned the most were those regarding the economy and external relation:

- IMMIGRATION: control of EU borders (EU28-3%; MT EB80.1-36%; MT EB79.3-8%)
- GROWTH: measures to improve growth (EU28-4%; MT EB80.1-20%; MT EB79.3-13%)
- EMPLOYMENT: job creations/ employment/ youth employment (EU28-18%; MT EB80.1-14%; MT EB79.3-17%)

Figure 6 – Expectations from the EU



BENEFITS OF EU MEMBERSHIP

Positive results of the EU

Respondents residing in Malta believe that the most positive results of the EU are free movement of people, goods and services within the EU (46%) and peace among the Member States of the EU (45%). Results from the EU28 point towards the same two aspects. These two results of the EU were also the ones mentioned the most by Maltese respondents in the previous wave, albeit in inverted order. When compared to results from the rest of the EU, local respondents gave more importance to the level of social welfare in the EU (EU28-17%; MT-29%), and less importance to the Common Agricultural Policy (EU28-10%; MT-5%). On the other hand, seven percent of local respondents believe that the EU did not bring about any positive results, compared to the twelve percent of respondents throughout all the 28 EU countries, who shared this belief.

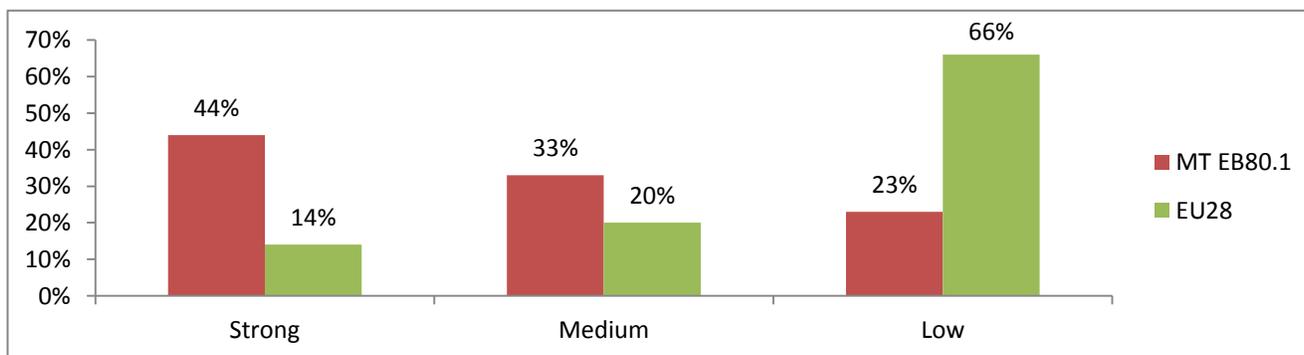
Actions carried out by respondents

A list of statements was read out to respondents and they were asked to identify whether they have carried out such actions in the twelve months prior to the day of interview. When compared to the EU28 average,

local results are consistently higher. Of particular note is the number of respondents residing in Malta who have watched a TV program (94%) or read a book, newspaper or magazine (69%) in a language other than their mother tongue. The most likely reason for such a high percentage is that despite Maltese being the mother tongue of most Maltese residents, English is also a national language. Moreover, a large percentage of Maltese citizens have significant exposure to Italian through Italian television stations, which until relatively recently were the only ones available other than Maltese ones. Results show that, 20% of the Maltese population prefer to watch television in Italian, while 29% prefer to watch television in English⁶.

The number of respondents living in Malta, who claimed to have socialised with people from another EU country in November 2013 (69%) might have been affected by the continuous influx of foreigners to the island. According to the NSO Census 2005⁷, 4% of the local population are nationals of another EU country, while between January and November 2013, 1,297,771 departing tourists from European countries were recorded in Malta⁸. Based on these results, the International Openness Index (IOI) for Malta was mostly regarded as 'Strong', despite there being an exponential decrease from EB77 and during Autumn 2013 stood at 44%. Nevertheless, the IOI for Malta was ranked as the second-highest among other EU countries, and much above the EU28 average results (EU28-14%; MT-44%) (Figure 7).

Figure 7 – Index of openness to other EU countries



When respondents were given a list of values and were asked to identify which, in their opinion, were the best three that represent the EU, both local respondents and those from the rest of the EU Member States mentioned:

- HUMAN RIGHTS (EU28-34%; MT-41%)
- PEACE (EU28-37%; MT-31%)
- DEMOCRACY (EU28-30%; MT-29%)

In Malta, the same three values in the same order, were mentioned by respondents in EB79.3.

⁶Results are based on the National Statistics Office report – Culture Participation Survey 2011. Fieldwork was conducted in April 2011, with 349,684 individuals aged 16 years and over. The structure of the sample was based on the NSO Census 2005, in order to be representative of the population.

⁷The most recent Census carried out in Malta was published in 2005 by the National Statistics Office (NSO). The next Census is to be published by 2014.

⁸Results are based on the NSO report - Departing tourists: November 2013.

EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE

When asked about the likelihood of making use of the European Citizens' Initiative, most respondents, both throughout the 28 EU countries (69%) and in Malta (53%), claimed that they were not likely to make use of such an initiative. This was also the case in previous waves of the Eurobarometer. There was a relatively high percentage of respondents who gave a 'don't know' answer (EU28-10%; MT-19%) – possibly due to low level of awareness of what this initiative entails.

Regardless of whether respondents were likely to make use of the European Citizens' Initiative or not, they were asked to point out the field they would most likely use this initiative for, if they ever had to make use of it. Similar to previous waves, employment was the most mentioned topic by both Maltese and EU28 respondents (EU28-37%; MT-44%), while education was again mentioned as the second-most important topic to focus on (EU28-23%; MT-33%). The issue of immigration was given more importance by respondents from Malta in EB80.1 when compared to previous results (MT EB80.1-24%; MT EB78.1-16%) and also to the rest of the EU citizens. This was ranked as the third most important field and Malta had the third highest ranking among the other countries, in this regard (EU28-15%; MT-24%).

A noteworthy finding is that, when compared to the rest of the EU countries, Malta had some of the lowest percentages of respondents who mentioned crime (5%) and agriculture (3%). Once again, a high 'Don't know' answer could relate to the lack of awareness of the European Citizens' Initiative.

INFORMATION ON NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN POLITICAL MATTERS

Awareness of European matters

European citizens were asked about the extent to which they think their country's population is well informed about European matters. Slightly less than half of Maltese respondents interviewed believe that the Maltese population is well informed. This is considerably higher than the EU28 average (EU28-23%; MT-44%) and the third highest ranking among all EU countries. Nevertheless, half of local respondents still believe that the local population is generally not well informed about European matters (50%), making Malta among the countries with the lowest percentages in this regard – preceded only by Turkey (39%) and Luxembourg (47%). On a personal level, the percentage of respondents living in Malta who claimed that they themselves were well informed about European matters is 16 percentage points higher than the EU28 average and makes up 45% of respondents interviewed.

Acquiring news on national and European political matters

The majority of both local respondents and those from other EU countries mentioned the television as their primary source of information for both national (EU28-82%; MT-85%) as well as European political matters (EU28-75%; MT-79%). In Malta, there has been a steady decline in the number of respondents who used the radio as a source of information for national (MT EB80.1-39%; MT EB78.1-50%) and European (MT EB80.1-43%; MT EB78.1-34%) political matters, and an average of 10 percentage point increase in those who use the internet for information. Maltese respondents were also more likely than the EU28 average, to resort to the

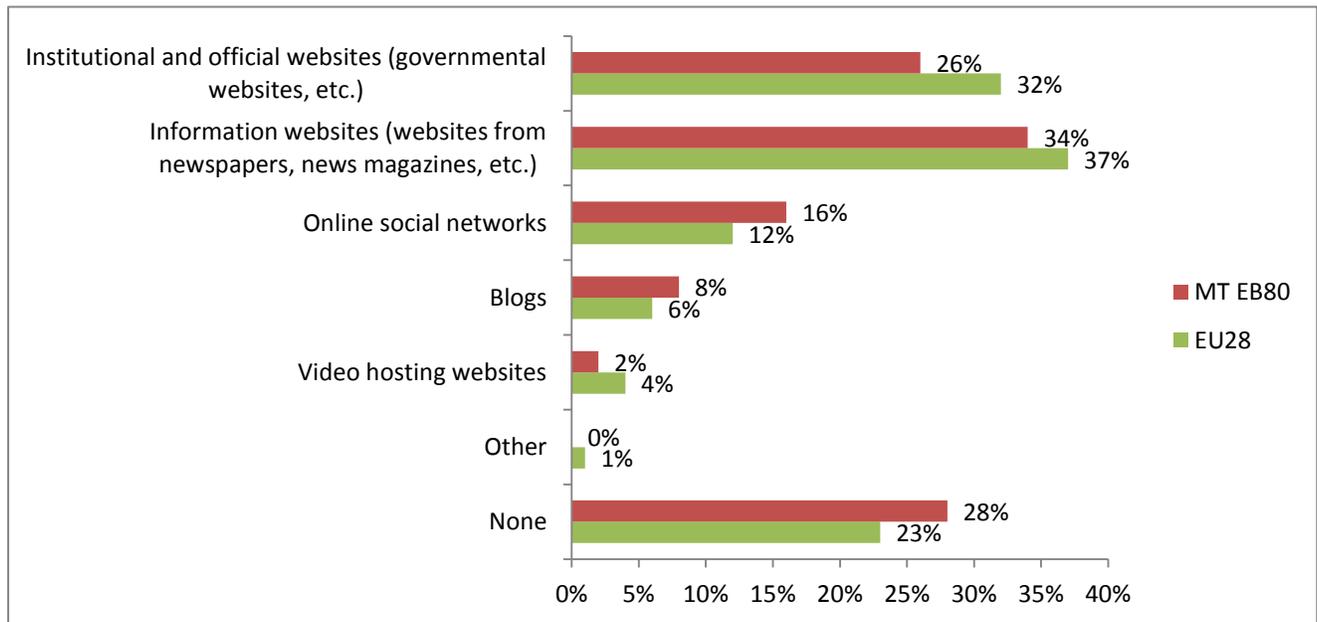
internet for information about these political matters, while individuals in other EU countries were more likely to use the written press. As in previous waves, respondents residing in Malta tend to be more interested in national, rather than European, political matters since 12% of these respondents claimed that they do not look for news about European political matters, compared to 4% who do not look for news about national political matters.

Respondents who use the internet to inform themselves about national⁹ and European¹⁰ political matters, were asked to name the type of websites that they generally resort to. Information websites were the most popular for both Maltese and EU28 respondents, to gather news about national and also European political matters (EU28-67%; MT-76%). Information websites have grown in importance for Maltese respondents, and show an increase of 10 percentage points from EB78.1¹¹. Online social networks were ranked as the second-most sought source by Maltese respondents, from where they gather news about national (35%) and European (34%) political matters.

Useful websites to acquire information about EU matters

European citizens were asked to identify the type of website which they find useful when looking for information about the EU. A good percentage of respondents living in Malta (28%), and similarly throughout the rest of the EU (23%), stated that there was no specific type of website, amongst those presented, that they consider useful to find information regarding the EU. Thirty-four percent of Maltese citizens would find it useful to have information regarding the EU on information websites (such as websites of newspapers, news magazines), followed by institutional and official websites such as government websites (26%) (Figure 8).

Figure 8 – Websites useful for gathering EU information



⁹ Respondents who get information on national political matters on the internet: EU28 – 9,084 respondents; Malta - 220 respondents.

¹⁰ Respondents who get information on European political matters on the internet: EU27 – 8,146 respondents; Malta - 198 respondents.

¹¹ EB78.1 was carried out in November 2012 (Autumn)